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The next generation
Hockey players of all ages took to the ice before this weekend's home game for the Huskies.
/TIM YANO staff photographer

Strong Mayor Powers put in play for Minden budget

EMILY STONEHOUSE
Editor

Minden's Mayor Bob Carter has accessed his Strong Mayor Powers, and opted to veto a number of amendments council had presented to the 2026 budget.

Under the newly implemented regulations of Strong Mayor Powers, put in place since May of last year, the municipal mayor is responsible for presenting the budget based on staff recommendations.

On Dec. 15, Carter presented a draft budget during a regular meeting, to which council members had a number of concerns. "This budget was developed to meet certain goals for the community," said Carter. "The budget sustained and strove to enhance essential programs and

see CARTER page 13

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County of Haliburton commits to accessibility

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

Haliburton County strives to be a place where all are welcome, supported, and seen. And through the multi-year joint accessibility plan, spanning between 2023 to 2027, initiatives mapped out aim to do just that.

During a regular meeting of county council on Jan. 14, Sue Tiffin, the director of community outreach, presented an outline of accessible projects that have been completed across the county in recent years. Tiffin was seeking approval from council to move ahead with the document created alongside the joint accessibility committee, and allow for the piece to be published online to meet legal obligations around the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

"Throughout Ontario, approximately 2.6 million people – or one in four citizens – have a disability," opens the document. "We know that in Haliburton County, as our population ages, the number of people with disability in our society will increase. It has always been important to work toward a more accessible and inclusive community by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for those of us with disability and for those of us who will experience a disability in the future."

The report noted that the County of Haliburton is committed and guided by the four core principles of accessibility, including dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. It also noted that the organization supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities, as set out in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The document goes on to list a number of completed projects in all four municipalities, seen below:

County of Haliburton:

- Expanded access to council and committee meetings by integrating system components to broadcast a hybrid model of in-person and online livestreams
- Together with member municipalities, implemented internet and/or telephone voting capabilities for municipal and school board elections
- Created a policy to enforce only accessible PDFs posted on both iCompass and the County website
- Incorporated accessibility standards into the County's Procurement Policy
- Rebuilt the County website to be fully accessible

Algonquin Highlands:

- Built new washrooms and entrance way with automatic door openers and accessible ramp at municipal office
- Built new accessible washroom at Stanhope Fire Hall
- Created new website with focus on improved content, communication and accessible content
- Installed new accessible outdoor privies, pathways and pavilion at Oxtongue Lake Community Centre
- Installed accessible picnic tables throughout township-owned parks

Dysart et al:

- Built fully accessible Welcome Centre with universal and accessible washrooms
- Built new skateboard park and increased accessible parking in parking area
- Built new accessible port-a-potty at parks and community centres throughout township
- Installed new solar lighting along pathways and improved trails in compliance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards
- Installed accessible beach mat at Rotary Beach

Highlands East:

- Constructed a washroom with shower to be barrier-free at the Cardiff pool change house
- Installed automatic door openers at Gooderham and Cardiff libraries
- Installed new section of concrete sidewalk at Lloyd Watson Centre and the municipal office, sloped for accessibility
- Installed a ramp and widened door at Cardiff storage facility
- Stabilized the roadway at Cardiff ball diamond

Minden Hills:

- Designed accessible access during renovation of Minden Hills Community Centre
- Installed accessibility signage at Minden Hills ballpark washrooms
- Adjust serving counter height in kitchen of Minden Hills Community Centre to meet accessibility requirements
- Installed automatic door push button at Cultural Centre Gallery Building
- Completed assessment of walking trails, boat ramps, playgrounds

These initiatives are in addition to regular and ongoing accessibility improvements.

And the list continues. Tiffin provided a number of opportunities the County has to incorporate accessibility into training, staffing, and procurement. At the end of the document, a list of ongoing projects is highlighted in yellow, with barriers identified, the reasoning behind the barriers, and the plan of action to move ahead.

The document is active for another year, with standards mandated by the AODA. New builds must incorporate these considerations in any future developments. "As we incorporate the expertise and knowledge of people with personal experiences with disability into policies," reads the document, "programs and services and include the Joint Accessibility Committee in the development and evaluation of strategy initiatives, the County of Haliburton is determined to continue achieving greater accessibility in our community."

County council approved the document to allow it to go live online, and to be shared with the lower-tier municipalities.

Council renews historic $2 lease for outpost

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

In a move to preserve local history while updating municipal records, Highlands East council approved a new 10-year lease agreement with the Heritage Guild for the Wilberforce Red Cross Outpost Historic House.

The agreement, which replaces a decades-old contract, ensures the museum will continue to operate out of its current premises for the nominal fee of $2.00 per year.

Municipal Clerk Robyn Rogers said in her report to council that the update was a matter of "due diligence and housekeeping." The previous lease had not been revised in many years and no longer met modern legal or safety standards.

"This lease agreement was taken to the members of the Heritage Guild to review," she said during a regular council meeting last week. "So it is going to reflect the current standards and requirements. Some of the updates that were necessary as a previous agreement had not been revised, as I said, for some time."

The updated agreement includes terms that accurately reflect the current and intended use of the property and ensure safety and operational alignment. Updated insurance provisions to ensure compliance with current regulations and best practices. The new lease spans 10 years, providing the guild with long-term security while allowing the municipality to update requirements as needed during the term.

During the meeting, Deputy Mayor Cecil Ryall asked for clarification on the financial terms of the agreement.

"So we're saying that the total cost to these people is $2 a year?" he asked.

The clerk confirmed the figure, noting that the fee is a symbolic gesture.

"This amount just pays the minimal fee to recognize [the guild's] vital role in preserving the history of the museum," she said.

The building itself is more than just a local landmark. In 2003, it was designated a National Historic Site of Canada, making its preservation a high priority for Wilberforce.

> ***"This amount just pays the minimal fee to recognize [the guild's] vital role in preserving the history of the museum."***
>
> – Robyn Rogers, Highlands East Clerk

The outpost was the first of its kind in Ontario and Haliburton County's very first hospital. From 1922 to 1957, live-in nurses provided essential care, setting a standard for rural health programs that was eventually adopted worldwide. Though its time as a nursing station ended in the late 50s, it continued to host various medical and community programs until 1963, according to the Red Cross.

The motion to approve the bylaw and lease agreement was moved by Councillor Ruth Strong and seconded by Councillor Angela Lewis. It passed with a unanimous vote and no opposition.

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Council considers cemetery gazebo use

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

With change, there are going to be some kinks down the road.

One issue was discussed at AH council on Thursday, Jan. 15, regarding the wording of policy for use of the gazebo at St. Stephen's Cemetery. Terry Moore, president of the Green Burial Society (GBS) presented thoughts on behalf of the GBS towards the use of the gazebo.

"I wanted to thank council for support, for the creation of a year-round green burial at St. Stephen's Cemetery and also thank you for the partnership that resulted in creation of the beautiful timber frame gazebo within that green burial section," opened Moore. "We are acutely aware that this is your cemetery. These are recommendations we ask you to put into the mix."

Some of the issues Moore discussed included the wording of direct burials, the use of the gazebo for green burial funerary ceremonies, the need to transport remains directly from a hearse to the grave, and the ability of staff to limit the number of witnesses during internment.

"Direct burial, in green burials refers to the idea of removing barriers between the soil and the body," said Moore.

Moore explained that there is an encouragement for the biodegradation of remains to return to the earth.

Wanting to expand the use of the gazebo for funerary processions, Moore shared photos of his wife's interment ceremony in March.

The images showed the casket on stands after being moved from the hearse. Due to slippery conditions, the casket was brought under the gazebo for a small ceremony before burial.

"My mother is 97, she uses a walker to get around. In order for [her to participate], it would not be a good idea for her to be around the grave," said Moore. "There should be a place for her to be able to say those things in relative safety."

For the internment, they were not aware of the policy regarding direct burials. The family had a conversation with the funeral director who suggested a ceremony under the gazebo.

Everyone took a seat on the benches telling stories of how Moore's late wife, Shirley, affected their lives. The procession lasted a half an hour before she was buried.

Current wording in the gazebo's policy makes reference to not allowing picnics, or parties, which can be interpreted as large gatherings.

Moore asked council to consider supervised pre-planned and approved use of the gazebo for interment ceremonies with a casket present.

"It would provide families with an intimate and protected space in which to pay their last respects to a loved one, prior to internment," said Moore. "I can't tell you how meaningful that opportunity was for my family. We would like that same opportunity to be extended to other families."

"We believe this option can be offered while protecting both the natural features of the green burial section as well as attendee and staff health at the same time," he said.

Moore requested that the council consider the notes and take some time before passing a final policy for gazebo use.

"The gazebo is intended to serve as a quiet, respectful place for reflection and contemplation for all members of the community," said Sarah Hutson, deputy clerk.

Mayor Liz Danielsen asked if AH had met with local funeral directors. Hutson says that she spoke with them at the beginning of the bylaw revision. She assures that both of the local funeral directors receive updates.

St. Stephen's Cemetery has a gazebo built for green burials, but the use of the space has been up for debate by council members. /FILE

"The funeral directors are onsite, only for the purpose to witness the internment and our cemetery staff are onsite to supervise our assets and our grounds," said Hutson. "The funeral directors can consult on the use of the gazebo."

Hutson says the funerary procession is responsible for the placement and lowering of the casket. AH staff are responsible for burying and overseeing the burial process.

Danielsen asked how families might want to do something specific, if they could reach out to Hutson for permission to alter the ceremony.

"I found the policy a little bit stringent," said Mayor Liz Danielsen.

"The challenge becomes, in the eyes of the BAO (Bereavement Authority of Ontario), the consumer needs to fully understand what they are purchasing," said Hutson. "They need to understand what they can and can't, and what may have to happen, or not happen."

Hutson says that the policy could apply to a day when the weather is not appropriate for large gatherings. When it is icy outside, slippage and equipment malfunction may happen more easily.

When tires of equipment are moving around, it makes the surface more slippery.

As the first winter green burial option in Haliburton County, council agreed that there are going to be kinks in the policy along the way. When the use of the gazebo and green burials continue to happen, their policy can be further refined.

"I like the perspective of approaching the staff at the time with a preapproval process that may allow it," said Councilor Sabrina Richards.

When approached, staff would have the option to say no to a request if the conditions cannot be appropriately met.

Hutson says that there would be challenges for the consumer. If a customer were to know that they want to use the gazebo, but the time of passing is unknown, it could be more likely that the structure is not available.

Danielsen said that she is taken aback at the gazebo being closed during the winter

"Given climate change, things are changing back and forth," said Danielsen. "There are times when there is no snow. The ground may be softer and wetter, but not the same level of risk."

Deputy Mayor Jennifer Dailloux said that she wants to see the gazebo open as often as possible, for as long as possible.

"The loss of a loved one is a profound moment in the life of every family," said Dailloux. "I think we should do as much as we can to make our services amenable to engage that profound moment."

"With regards to equity, the way I look at it is to flip the situation of a death to that of a marriage. There are a lot of people who want to be married outdoors," said Dailloux. "There is a reasonability clause, if it is stormy, we can't give you your outdoor wedding."

Dailloux then followed her statement saying that no venue bans all outdoor weddings in the name of fairness, due to cancellation from weather.

A large part of reasonability could be on the funeral directors, knowing when it is and isn't appropriate to conduct a service outside under the gazebo, or with a large number of visitors.

Hutson asked if the gazebo could also be used for other services, such as ceremonies with cremated remains.

Council was divided on what services would be able to use the gazebo. While it was donated by the GBS, Richards says that the gazebo should be open to all visitors.

Dailloux says that the designated plot of greenery for the GBS should remain separate, but everyone should be allowed to use the gazebo.

"I think the line is drawn for the interment, but not the social use," said Dailloux.

Danielsen questioned what the township's response would be if someone wants to use the gazebo to get married at.

"The bottom line is, the donation is now a municipal asset," said Richards. "Our municipality should not discriminate amongst anyone."

In terms of accessibility, Danielsen noted the benefit of allowing a service to take place under the gazebo.

After extensive discussion, council concluded that they have provided enough clarity for staff to consider before continuing with the gazebo policy.

Danielsen says that there should not be an issue with moving the casket prior to burial.

Hutson says that they may need to revisit the language around "direct burials" and will bring the policy back for discussion with council.

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Piper Cameron Ferguson parades in with Highland dancers at last year's Robbie Burns Night at the Haliburton Legion. The traditional Scottish evening includes live music, dancing, and a sampling of Scottish food. /FILE

Robbie Burns celebrates Highlands heritage

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

It's a night of drinks, of dance, and of course, a whole lot of music.

The annual Robbie Burns Night is set for this Saturday, Jan. 24 at the Haliburton Legion, and for Pipe Sergeant Cameron Ferguson, it's a little slice of home.

"It's become a community staple," said Ferguson. "It's wonderful to see people carrying on these traditions."

Ferguson originally hails from Scotland, but Canada has been home for nearly two decades. Growing up, he was an avid bagpiper, and has committed to the instrument for 40 years. When he settled in Canada, he was pleasantly surprised to find that there was a bagpipe band flourishing in the small town of Haliburton. "It's great that a little town like this has a bagpipe band, and so much community support around the band," he said.

In 1970, local musicians Earl Cooper and Don Johnston joined together to see if there were any other Highlanders in the Highlands: it was time to form a Pipes and Drums Band. It was not always easy, but their persistence made it work. With Don being the only drummer, and Earl being the only piper, the chances of success were slim. Yet with an outpouring of support from the Ladies Auxiliary, as well as a smattering of community interest, the Haliburton Highlanders Pipes and Drums Band came into fruition. For the past five decades, the band has added musical pride to festivals, graduations, special events, parades, and celebrations across the county.

And their crowning achievement? Bringing Robbie Burns to life every January. The evening consists of live music, Scottish dancing, Robbie Burns poem readings, and samples of Scottish delicacies, including haggis. "I think people are often intrigued by the event if they haven't been before," said Ferguson. "But once they've been, they get hooked to it. It's an inclusive, down-to-earth community event."

Tickets can be purchased at Canoe FM, the Haliburton Legion, and at the door the night of the event, if they are still available. Ferguson encourages folks to purchase tickets in advance, because night-of purchases are not always guaranteed.

Doors for Robbie Burns Night at the Haliburton Legion open at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 24, with music kicking off at 7 p.m.

Old–time square dance coming to Haliburton

ADAM FRISK

Journalist

Looking to shake off the winter blues? Dance Happens Here Haliburton (DH3) is inviting the community to trade their snow boots for dancing shoes.

DH3 is hosting an evening of some good old-fashioned square dancing and live bluegrass music at the Haliburton Legion next month.

Playing off the success of last summer's street dance at the River Cone in Minden, organizers came up with the idea of bringing that same high-energy, inclusive fun indoors during the winter season.

"We were talking about the old-fashioned square dance with a caller, where someone leads you through the steps," said DH3 committee member Myra Stephen in a telephone interview last week. "You don't have to have a partner; they talk you through it, and everybody can participate."

To ensure the night is authentic, DH3 has hired Hannah Shira Naiman, a professional caller and folk musician who recently moved to the Huntsville area, Stephen explained. Born in Toronto, Naiman comes from a long line of folk musicians and dancers, specializing in American old-time square dances, and has called for dances across eastern Ontario, Quebec, and the United States.

Naiman will be accompanied by three members of the acclaimed Toronto bluegrass band, The Barrel Boys.

Stephen said the event is supported by the Canadian Arts Presentation Fund, which helps DH3 bring unique dance experiences to the county.

"We try to do different things and bring different dance experiences to the county," she said. "We want people to have a chance to experience things they might not otherwise experience, and then if they get a taste of it, hopefully they'll have an opportunity to keep going in other ways."

The evening will also feature a performance by the Haliburton Scottish Country Dancers following an intermission.

"We didn't want to start with a performance because we don't want people to feel intimidated," Stephen explained. "What Hannah will lead us through, anybody can do. But having the Scottish Country Dancers perform shows what's possible with practice and gives people a chance to see another local group they might want to join."

Tickets for the Feb. 7 event are $20 for adults, $10 for college students, and free for children and high school students.

"We really want this to be a family event," Stephen noted. "That's why it's free for kids. You don't need a partner, you don't need special clothes, and you don't need experience."

The only requirement for the event is a pair of clean, indoor shoes to keep the dance floor dry and safe.

Tickets are available online at the Dance Happens Here Haliburton website and at Redmans Records.

The band Union Duke will be starting their cross-country tour in Haliburton at the end of the month. /submitted

Union Duke rocks Haliburton

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

It's a little rock, a little folk, pinches of bluegrass, and a smattering of roots music.

Union Duke. A Toronto-based band who has been making music for nearly two decades. They've toured the world; across North America and Europe.

And now, following the release of their newest album, they'll be visiting the Haliburton Highlands. "We are lucky to be in a place where there is a large support for folk music," said Matt Warry-Smith, the drummer and founding member of the band. "I'm incredibly grateful."

The band will be gracing the local stage at the Haliburton Legion on Jan. 31. But they're no strangers to exploring rural communities. A number of their albums have been written and recorded using cottage country as their background.

"I love the warmth of a real place," said Warry-Smith. "A lot of my favourite albums were recorded by guys holed up in one space together and working through it together. In our albums, we are seeking a vibe, and that vibe isn't perfection."

When you listen to Union Duke, you could draw similarities to bands such as Blue Rodeo or Mumford and Sons. With a lively banjo and jaunty lyrics, the tunes are catchy, bright, and spirited. You'll find yourself humming them long after the album ends. "The tenets of Union Duke have always been folk, country, roots, and rock," said Warry-Smith. "But with time, it's evolved, and our priorities have shifted within those genres."

At the core of the rock group, Warry-Smith credits the friendship between bandmates as the reason the group has continued with such success. "We have a respect for each other," he said. "We just really prioritize making music together, and once you just prioritize that, the music gets better, the shows get better."

Warry-Smith described a Union Duke show as "very high energy," he said, with a laugh. "We're a pretty good time band. We want people to experience joy and levity when they come out."

But in light of the charged political climate, the drummer recognized his role as an advocate for those in need. "It's almost impossible to be apolitical these days," he said. "I think it's important that if you have any kind of soapbox, you can use that to spread a message.

"While we like our shows and our music to be a place of refuge, you can't tune it out completely," he said, in reference to the steady stream of negative news coming in from around the world. "In difficult times, in dark times, we need community more than ever."

Union Duke can be heard through any number of platforms, including YouTube, Band Camp, and Spotify. They also sell merchandise and albums at their shows, and the newest album will be available for purchase shortly.

Tickets for the upcoming Haliburton show can be purchased through the Folk Society, via www.haliburtonfolk.com. The event will be held at the Haliburton Legion on Jan. 31, with the doors opening at 7 p.m.

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2016

THERE'S A viral trend circulating online these days about throwing it back to 2016. While the year may seem in the not-so-distant rearview mirror, I think it came as a startling realization that it was now a decade ago.

The reasoning behind the trending topic is that 2016 is remembered as a simpler time. It was a season before reels dominated Instagram, when Barack Obama was the President of the United States, and the average cost of a home was under $500,000.

There was a movement around sharing food pictures online, 'influencers' was a relatively unknown term, and life seemed like it came at a slower pace.

When looking back through our own archives, major topics of concern in early 2016 that hovered in our headlines consisted of the closure of the Welcome Centre on Highway 35, funding around the Fish Hatchery up for debate, and the County working towards a 3.85 per cent tax hike.

Emily Stonehouse

Editorial

Honestly, looking back through our pages, not much has changed in the past decade. We still have many of the same contributors, and while staffing and layout has shifted, the priorities remain aligned.

I am on the fence about whether that's a good thing or not.

Dysart recently approved a 4.98 per cent tax increase. And while Mayor Fearrey has pushed to keep it below that five per cent, keeping the increase "palatable" for tax payers, you can't help but wonder if perhaps you need to spend a bit to make a bit.

If we look back over the past ten years, while there are notable new businesses and a smattering of novel events, not too much has changed.

And maybe to some, that's a good thing. We've stuck to the status quo. Our taxes remain within reach, our community keeps it consistent.

Perhaps that's the priority. In a community that struggles financially, it does make sense.

But it's very challenging to do anything new with the same model applied. We keep it at a steady rate, but as a result, the pie in the sky projects get the chopping block.

Sometimes I've wondered if municipal staff and councillors could prioritize budget items through a departmental rotation. Maybe one year, the roads department gets the big boost. Major projects are tackled, bridges are finally built. The other departments would get their bare needs met, but their pie in the sky projects would come during the next season.

Perhaps the following budget go-around, it's time to feature recreation. We as taxpayers funnel our energies and our monies towards projects and initiatives that make our community vibrant; an arts centre, a recreational facility, perhaps even, dare I say, a community pool.

When we scrape the surface of community needs in an effort to stay within a palatable threshold, it limits our ability to move past 2016. Sticking to the status quo is beneficial through one lens, but if we have dreams of growth, maybe it's time for a different perspective.

So then when we look in our rearview mirror at 2026, we can see the progress we've made, and be proud of how far we've come as a community.

Death, where is thy sting?

ON A crisp day in December, roads greasy with snow, a bright young woman hosted a Death Café in our local library. Eight of us gathered with tea and sinfully extravagant chocolate cake with drippy caramel between the layers to chat about death.

The conversation was far-ranging and produced easy laughter far more than I, at least, had anticipated.

I learned about alkaline hydrolysis – water cremation -- which I think is going to be my preferred dissolution. The cadaver is rocked gently for several hours in warm water with a bit of alkaline (think lye) added, by which time the flesh has been sucked from the bones. They're retrieved from the nutrient-rich sterile water and pulverized – as are bones following cremation by fire – and there your tidy remains are, ready for whatever your loved ones decide to do with it.

Fay Martin

Poke, Peel Pair, Ponder

Amanda Lytle, our facilitator, who is a death doula, told of an alkaline hydrolysis business that offered to bottle and store the water to use for watering flower beds on their property, plots available to replace monuments. It reminded me of the efficiency of aquaponics, where water in which fish have lived (and excreted) is used as a base in which to grow food.

Amanda mentioned the metaphoric balance of coming into the world in a bath of water (absent the lye) and leaving the world similarly.

It all seemed poetic to me.

Of course we spoke of other things, of where and how death takes place, the legalities and rituals surrounding it, the helpfulness or otherwise of people and systems. Some of us had questions, some had relevant experience, all of us appreciated the opportunity to speak openly and candidly about thoughts and feelings (and information) usually kept private.

If there was a theme, it was the importance of communicating our wishes to those who will preside in some way over our death. If there was a lesson, it was that death is an everyday companion to life. Like a shadow, I thought. You may not always see it, for sure you don't spend your life focusing on it, but it is inevitably there. It is proof of your existence.

When I visited Green Care Farms in the Netherlands last spring – these are small, non-medical residences for people with dementia – I came away with a three-part mantra, the last piece of which is 'Live till you die'. The residents in the two locations I visited tended to participate actively in community life until about a week before they died, which was also my experience with my husband.

My sense was that the residents were given permission to choose to exit their lives when they'd had as much life as they could manage. I was raised on a farm where the cycle of life and death was contextual, so this made easy sense to me.

What also comes to mind is my mother, who, far away in Alberta, hung in with pervasive ill health for months while I was managing my husband's cancer treatment. She got up and dressed to meet with me when I was at last able to travel. She wanted to know if I was likely to become a widow at age 52, the age she was when she became a widow. I said not probably. I went my way, to honour the obligation that had bought my plane ticket. She went back to her bed. When I visited the next day, she'd turned her face to the wall, and six days later she was dead.

I know this reeks of wanting to control death, to grasp the thistle of fear of the unknown.

But what's the alternative? To constantly look over our shoulders to gauge the whereabouts of the shadow? To whistle in the dark? To focus sequentially on the parts of our body and mind that don't function as once they did and cajole them into renewed youth?

I yearn for our culture to embrace death – our own personal death, not just an airy construct – as the final chapter of a life fully lived. And to craft it to our liking, to the extent possible.

The enthusiasm of the eight who gathered for the Death Café suggests I am not alone.

points of view

Remembering me

THE OTHER day during a car ride with a couple of friends, one of our group quietly said, "When I'm gone, I'd like people to remember me for something special."

During poignant moments such as this, when light conversation gets suddenly deep, people tend to go silent and turn inwards to reflect upon their own legacies. That's what happened there too.

I know what you're thinking. And, yes, it was the perfect time to make a fart noise.

Unfortunately, I missed that opportunity as we were all soon distracted by a mink bounding across the road.

After that, the moment was lost forever.

Since then though, I have thought more about my friend's sentiment, and realized two things. First, I have been using the word "posterity" all wrong. Second, when I'm gone, I'd like people to remember me as being tall.

Loon Tales

Steve Galea

To be clear, when I say "gone", I mean immediately after I walk away, and while I am still living.

I couldn't care less what people say about me after I'm dead. I probably won't even hear it. OK, I might be wrong on that. Maybe we will be able to hear how others remember us after we're dead. What do I know?

Yet, even if that's so, I don't plan on spending my valuable afterlife time eavesdropping on the living – that's probably what causes unnecessary hauntings. No, I'd rather focus on the great fishing we've been promised in the afterlife, and what flies I could tie using angel wing feathers.

That's why I'd like to hear someone remember me as tall while I am still living.

I don't think this is too much to ask.

It doesn't cost you a thing. And it would make me happy to know that this is how I am being remembered.

Those of you with a conscience might be saying, "Hold it. That would be a lie."

True. I am currently five-foot-three and shrinking fast.

Fortunately, there is a way to ease your pesky conscience. Think of it this way: I would be considered tall if I were living in Aztec times. You see after much research on when I would have been considered tall, I discovered that the Aztec average man was five-foot-two.

So, you could say, "I remember Steve. He was tall." (And then whisper, "… for an Ancient Aztec man.")

I can't tell you how great this discovery has made me feel. Admittedly, this is probably not a good enough reason to wish that someone invents a time travel machine that could take me back to the Aztec Empire.

I mean the Aztecs were known for their cruel human sacrifices, and the people they sacrificed were mostly captives from their many conquests, or, I'm guessing, tourists who didn't upgrade their travel package. So, yes, it would be risky to visit them. On the other hand, as I was being prepared for sacrifice, it would be nice to hear just one of the High Priests joke, "How's the air up there?"

To summarize, the decision to avoid time travelling there would not be as easy as you'd think. Especially when you consider the average top shelf in an Aztec house was likely placed at a reasonable height.

OK, I got a little off track.

Remember me as tall. But don't worry, we all know that's stretching the truth.

pic *of the* past

Main Street, Haliburton, before the roads were paved. Many of the buildings pictured were lost to fires over the years. Submitted by Kim Emmerson

Aligned

I LOVE going to the SIRCH Bistro and Marketplace. I meet friends there for lunch at least once a week, and my husband joins his Fish Hatchery volunteer friends for breakfast after their work is done. Jim and I often talk about how welcoming the bistro feels - the way the staff recognize us, greet us with big smiles, and offer genuinely attentive service. The food is always delicious, homemade, and prepared with care.

In yoga, we often talk about "aligning our bodies" so that when we move into poses, we support ourselves in the most optimal way. Whether we are in a forward bend, a backbend, a twist, or any other movement, alignment helps us find balance and ease. Our intention is not perfection, but to move in ways that promote stability, mobility, safety, respect, and compassion for our bodies. Alignment asks us to listen, to be present, and to honour where we are in each moment. When we align ourselves physically, we are also open to the possibility of aligning with something greater than ourselves - something larger than the moment on the mat.

Tales from the great Green meadow

Lynda Shadbolt

I think of the nineteen monks and their dog walking from Texas to Washington, aligned in their shared intention to promote peace, compassion, and kindness. Their journey is a reminder that alignment can be both deeply personal and powerfully collective.

When I am at SIRCH, I feel that same sense of collective alignment. The staff, the food, and the atmosphere all seem guided by a shared purpose: to provide excellent service, create a warm and welcoming space, and offer nourishing, delicious meals. Everyone is welcome, and the overall vibe is relaxed and genuine. Each person who works there appears to radiate a consistent wish for guests to feel cared for and to have a positive experience.

Our nervous systems respond deeply to this kind of environment. When we feel welcome, at ease, safe, and supported, our bodies relax. We can enjoy our food fully and digest it more easily when our whole being feels held in a peaceful and compassionate space. And we can enjoy the companionship of our friends. This kind of collective alignment does not happen by accident. It grows from deep respect. Respect for one another, for every role that makes the place function, and for the intention behind the work. It requires ongoing conversation and reflection about the experience an organization wants to offer. Just as we can feel when alignment is present, we can also sense when it is missing. When people do not feel supported, heard, or encouraged, it is easy for indifference and disconnection to arise. Alignment, whether in a yoga pose or a community space, is ultimately an act of kindness - and a quiet, powerful expression of peace. The inspiration for this article comes to you from a beautiful and wise group of women who breathe and move together every week for their own well being and the well being of all of life. Aligned in love.

RED HAWKS

Red Hawk skiers continue to dominate the podium

KAREN GERVAIS

Guest Columnist

Group shot at Peterborough Invitational January 8. /photos by Karen Gervais

HHSS skiers competed in Peterborough and at the Kawartha Nordic Invite on Jan. 8 and 14 respectively. Both days were mild and Red Hawk skiers had to respond to icy and slushy conditions. The meets included skiers from Peterborough schools St. Peter's, Adam Scott, Thomas A. Stewart as well as Lakefield College School.

In the Junior Girls 5-kilometre race, Annika Gervais continued to lay claim to the third-place position on the podium, followed by teammates Anika Suke in fourth and Kailey Hoare in fifth and sixth at each meet. Novice Girls Leah Allder and Quinn Hamilton stepped up their game to make the leap to the Junior 5-kilometre distance after each taking a turn winning the Novice division.

The Red Hawk Junior Boys team continues to fly high, with Tristan Humphries continuing his winning streak and teammates Kip Kelly, Alex Lee and Duncan Evans-Fockler capturing the remaining top 5 positions. At Kawartha Nordic, HHSS junior boys owned the podium with Humphries in first, Kelly in second, and Lee in third. This team has been untouchable by other schools thus far in the Sprint Relays. Junior Boy Aren Addison also made the leap to the 5-kilometre distance as a Novice skier and continues to move up the Junior Boys ranks.

Senior Girl Violet Humphries has also had an undefeated season so far. Supporting on the podium has been Ella Gervais with two third-place finishes this season and Grace Allder in fourth at Kawartha Nordic and Olivia Gruppe third in Peterborough. Ruby Morrison also showed her strength making the jump from the Novice division to complete her first 7-kilometre senior course at Kawartha Nordic.

Senior Boy Evan Backus posted some fast times to place second at Kawartha Nordic and win the Peterborough race. Teammates Graham Backus, Winston Ramsdale, Owen Megrah-Poppe also achieved top five honours.

The skiers will break from competition for exams and look to return to racing at the Orillia Invitational on Feb. 4 for a preview of the OFSAA courses at Hardwood Hills. They will then return to race in Haliburton where we will host COSSA competition at Glebe on Feb. 11.

The skiers would like to express their gratitude to the grooming team at Glebe for keeping the trails in top condition for practice and all the community volunteers that came to support hosting the Haliburton Nordic Invitational on Dec. 16.

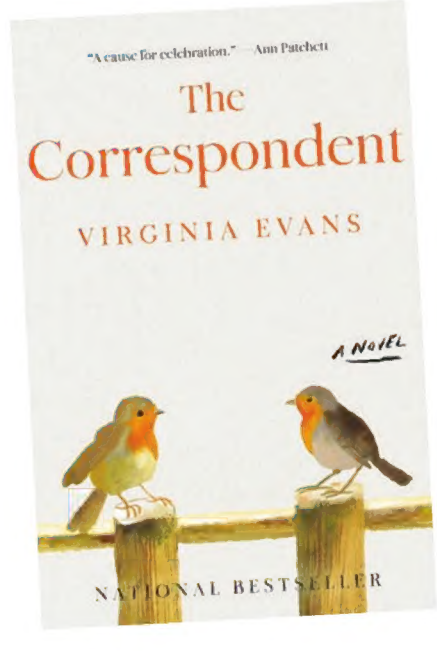
Junior Boys podium sweep at Kawartha Nordic Invite.

Minden Memories

Foxes at Play is an oil painting by André Lapine (R.C.A.) depicting a winter scene in Haliburton. The work was donated in memory of Verne Graham by Margaret Graham in 2001. Readers can view it on display now, along with other works from the permanent collection, at the Agnes Jamieson Gallery. /Photo courtesy of the Minden Hills Cultural Centre

HALIBURTON COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Book of the Week



Sybil Van Antwerp has spent her life making sense of the world one letter at a time. Each morning around ten-thirty, she writes to her brother, her best friend, the university president who denies her a coveted class, and even to authors whose words have shaped her thinking. And then there is the one letter she writes endlessly but never sends.

Her life seems complete: mother, grandmother, wife, divorcée, accomplished lawyer. Yet when a letter from her past resurfaces, Sybil is forced to confront a long-buried chapter of her life. In seeking the courage to finally offer forgiveness, she discovers that some truths can only be faced when laid bare on the page. She also learns that the act of writing might be the bridge to healing, understanding, and letting go.

The Correspondent by Virgina Evans is available at the Haliburton County Public Library as a book or Book Club Set. Visit haliburtonlibrary.ca to place a hold or learn more.

Red Hawks

Flying high

Hal High Red Hawks boys hockey team were back in the win column after defeating the visiting Thomas A. Stewart Secondary School 3-1 on Wednesday. /ADAM FRISK staff

The mascot for the new learning centre is Haymish, a Highland Cow. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

The newly-opened Highland Roots Learning Academy in Haliburton is catered to school-age children, through both elementary and secondary school levels.

New tutoring space welcomes local students

EMILY STONEHOUSE

Editor

When you walk into Highlands Roots Learning Academy, you can't help but feel welcome.

The walls are lined with books and educational resources. There is a stacked shelf of fluffy Highland cows, and bright colours adorn the walls in each room.

"Come in," said Lynne Stamp, the owner and lead educator for the facilitator, as I stomp snow off my soggy boots. "The kettle has just boiled."

Stamp is what some would call a lifelong educator. She originally hails from West Guilford, where she grew up with her older brothers and parents. When she was a teenager, her father was in a serious car accident, resulting in life as a quadriplegic. "Everyone pitched in to help out," said Stamp. "But the main care was from my mom. Maybe that's where the value of care really started for me."

Following high school, Stamp spent time in Toronto, working as an educational assistant and supporting kids with varying learning abilities to pay for her education at school. She finished her degree at the University of Calgary, where she earned a degree in linguistics and a bachelors in education, with a specialization in reading.

Her first days of teaching landed her in Kelowna, BC, but after five years of supply work, she began to feel the call of home. Stamp returned to Ontario, where she was offered a permanent teaching position at Somerset Drive Public School in Brampton. "And that's where I stayed for 25 years," she said.

Stamp poured her heart and soul into the role of teacher. She taught Grades 1 to 6, and loved every chapter of her story. "Kids are my life," she said as she sipped her peppermint tea. "Every part of teaching is my whole life."

She recalled often working 12-hour days, evolving with the curriculum and developing specific programs that would cater to the needs and learning abilities of each class. "I loved when they would come back to visit," she said. "I've had students come back when they got their drivers license, to introduce me to their wife, to get me to meet their own kids. I loved that."

> ***"There's a little piece of my past in everything I'm doing here ... Everything that's in this space comes from a good memory."***
>
> — Lynne Stamp, lead educator, Highland Roots Learning Academy

But after 25 years and a major shoulder injury that required multiple surgeries, Stamp knew it was time to hang up her hat. In June of this past year, the school she loved held a retirement party for the beloved teacher, and she began her next chapter. "But I don't think I was ready," she said. "It was my whole life."

Looking for a new direction in her world, Stamp returned to her hometown. But she saw a gap. With the differing directions education is taking, she recognized a need for kids to be met where they are at on their educational journeys. "What I do as a teacher is I show strategies," she said. "For all the different types of intelligence. If they have access to more time and different strategies, we would see a lot more light bulb moments for them."

In November, Stamp officially opened the doors to the Highlands Roots Learning Academy. Designed for tutoring and educational support for Grades 1 to 12, the Haliburton-based facility is open to all needs and interests. While Stamp takes the lead with resources and teaching, with her extensive background in primary grades, she also has others on-staff who specialize in high school level needs and services. "I know there's a bit of a stigma attached to high school students getting tutoring, so that's why I decided to offer the high school support online," said Stamp. "That way they can go on after school, and get the help they need."

Another way Stamp is supporting students is through the usage of Artificial Intelligence (AI). "AI is not going away," she said, "and as much as we may want to fight it, it's here. And our kids need to know how to use it as a tool."

Stamp has dedicated herself to learning how to work alongside AI for online games, programs, and services that support and grow with the students. "I want them to be able to use it safely as a tool for learning," she said, "that's how I am encouraging AI."

But it's not just AI in the academy. With 25 years of experience, Stamp has accumulated a number of educational resources and support programs to utilize when teaching. "There's a little piece of my past in everything I'm doing here," she said. "Everything that's in this space comes from a good memory."

With bits and pieces of her past decorating the space, she also carries a great number of books available for sale, for teacher or parents to pick up when it comes to additional support for their students and kids.

When Stamp takes on a new student, it begins with an assessment. "Let's go back a couple of steps," she said, "and then we can really see what may be missing." From that initial assessment and meeting with parents or guardians, Stamp is then able to provide the support needed in an effort to ensure the child will thrive. "I'm hoping I can continue to inspire kids," she said, "because that's my whole life. This is what I'm supposed to do."

The Highlands Roots Academy is located at 83 Maple Avenue, on the lower level of the Halco Plaza. Tutoring sessions are available seven days a week, and more information can be found at www.highlandroots.ca or by calling 705-455-7911.

"I have things here that can help kids," said Stamp, "but they need to see it. I needed a place of my own to keep teaching, and now, it's just like my classroom."

Haliburton Highlands

19TH DOGSLED DERBY

Jan. 24 - Jan. 25, 2026

Pinestone Resort and Conference Centre

SCHEDULE:

JANUARY 24

9 a.m. - Skijoring
10 a.m. - 2 dog race
11:30 a.m. - 4 dog race
1 p.m. - Youth race
1:45 p.m. - Kid & Mutt
2:15 p.m. - 6 dog race
3:45 p.m. - 8 dog race

JANUARY 25

8:30 a.m. - Skijoring
9:30 a.mm - 2 dog race
11 a.m. - 4 dog race
12:30 p.m. - Youth
1:15 p.m. - 6 dog race
2:30 p.m. - 8 dog race

RACE TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE BASED ON NUMBER OF ENTRIES

For more information, visit www.haliburtondogsledderby.com
705-457-5281
NOTE: Please leave personal dogs at home

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Minden Health Auxiliary celebrates 25 years

THOMAS SMITH
Journalist

The Minden Healthcare Auxiliary celebrated their 25th anniversary on Jan. 7 at the Minden Curling Club. This photo shows the volunteers who earned their 20 year pins. /submitted

The state of healthcare has changed since the Minden Healthcare Auxiliary was formed.

Through a hospital closure, doctors coming and going, and threats to funding, Minden's auxiliary has stuck through it all.

In 2000, Gordon Monk realized the opportunity for a gift shop at the site of the Minden Hospital, asking his wife, Donna, if she would be interested in forming an auxiliary to run the site. She agreed and formed the organization with five other members including Corinne Arsenault, Norma Nobles, Fern Donnelly, Katie Parker and Bonnie Fleischaker.

Each founding member donated $500 to kickstart the auxiliary.

"I am thrilled that it has lasted this long and seems to be thriving," said Monk, original founding member.

Over the decades, galas, tea parties, bowlathons, bake sales, theatre performances, and tag days have all contributed to healthcare in Minden and to a greater extent, Haliburton County.

Two months ago, readers likely noticed the photo of the wheelbarrow of wine, raffled off in the auxiliary's annual Wine on Wheels fundraiser.

All of these fundraisers are to provide county residents with the latest medical equipment, more beds for patient care, improvements to long term care homes, expanding offerings like the gynecology program at the HHHS' Minden site, and early detection equipment at Haliburton's hospital.

A hearty chunk of the funds raised is entirely from the dedicated volunteers of Minden's Healthcare Auxiliary.

Cecille Gibbons, marketing coordinator for the Healthcare Auxiliary, was attracted to join their ranks at a career fair in Minden. New to the Minden community, Gibbons joined with the intent to meet new people.

She never looked back.

Being a volunteer with the Minden Healthcare Auxiliary team can take as little as a few hours per month, to regular shifts of meeting people who visit the gift shop, helping out with social events at the long term care home, or selling tags for their tag day.

"We call ourselves the Minden minimall," said Gibbons with a laugh. An integral part of the Minden's HHHS site, the gift shop sells everything needed for residents, staff, and visitors alike. Open five days a week, the gift shop sells snacks, jewellery, clothing, uniform scrubs, and everything in-between. Combined with fundraising events throughout the year, the auxiliary has raised $450,000 coming into their 25th year.

"I just think that is phenomenal," she said.

Gibbons reports that the auxiliary has a great relationship with the Haliburton Highlands Health Services (HHHS), who provides them with a list of their most wanted improvements and equipment. In recognition, HHHS puts on special events to acknowledge their volunteers.

"Helping to improve the quality of care in Haliburton County is very rewarding, but the real bonus is working with such a wonderful group of individuals from HHHS, the Foundation and the Auxiliary," said Gail Simon, Minden Healthcare Auxiliary President. "I hope we will keep growing stronger."

In the 25 years of the auxiliary, no event has been as influential as the closure of the Minden Hospital.

"It was very controversial. In the beginning, it was a tough pill to swallow," she said.

Gibbons herself, like many others who moved before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, sought residence in close proximity to an emergency department. With the rising average age in the county, close proximity to Minden's hospital was a huge benefit, before it closed in 2023.

"At the same time, Haliburton's Hospital Auxiliary stopped. There were some ruffled feathers, but we have come to terms now. Haliburton isn't too far and to have it is a good thing," she said.

With persistent cuts to Ontario's healthcare system and the threat of privatized healthcare, the auxiliary takes matters into their own hands, with the graciousness of our community, towards supporting healthcare for the county.

"It's not all been smooth sailing," said Simon. "The COVID-19 pandemic and the closing of the Minden ER set us back. When the Haliburton Auxiliary closed down, we came close to folding as well. Fortunately our members weren't ready to quit."

To accomplish their goals in supporting the HHHS, the Minden Healthcare Auxiliary hopes to grow their numbers, especially with the support of younger people. Planning to increase their presence in the public this year, they hope that by their banner and talking with the public, spry and youthful members will join their team.

"It is difficult," said Gibbons. "The only way we can do this is to emphasize what we are doing for this community."

On Jan. 7 of this year, the Minden Healthcare Auxiliary team celebrated their 25th anniversary with a dinner and award ceremony at the Minden Curling Club. In total, there were eight celebrated for 25 years of service, 16 honoured for 20 years, 12 recognized for 15 years, 11 identified for ten years of service, and 11 noted for five years of dedication to the organization. Awards were presented throughout the evening. Guests of the celebrations enjoyed a dinner catered by Mulligan's and a fun gift exchange to celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

Two auxiliary members were awarded the Ontario Volunteer Service Award (OVSA) this year as well.

"The OVSA is given annually to members who have given many hours of service to the community," said Simon. "Both Lynn Preston and Mary Trumbull worked diligently in our gift shop."

The two women were recognized for their efforts, and Simon says that six of their members will be receiving the award this year.

Being an auxiliary member is like being part of a huge family. Once you try out volunteering with them, you will be hooked.

"We can see our results," she said. "We have nowhere to go but up."

Gibbons reports that the auxiliary's numbers grew in 2025 by at least five members.

"The community is so supportive of what we do, whether it is selling tags, or doing our wine fundraiser," she said. "Our community is amazing."

The Minden Healthcare Auxiliary celebrated their 25th anniversary on Jan. 7 at the Minden Curling Club. /submitted

Carter explains his reasoning for vetoes

from page 1

services. The budget continued a robust Capital Investment program, focusing on infrastructure and put aside 1.5 per cent for future capital needs."

With a tax increase of 3.95 per cent, the proposed budget included funding for a new community centre in Lochlin, and environmental considerations at Scotch Line waste facility. "This was all done while maintaining healthy financial reserves and attempting to keep tax rates affordable," said Carter.

The Dec. 15 meeting was nearly nine hours long to discuss the proposed budget. At the end of the meeting, tensions were high, and a special meeting was called for early in the new year. During the following meeting, council approved over 25 amendments to the proposed budget. "A number of these were to include charges that were unknown or unavailable at the time of the original budget," said Carter. "Others were to correct errors or omissions."

Under the regulations of Strong Mayor Powers, Carter was then granted a number of days to either accept the amendments, or veto them.

In a public statement made on Jan. 16, Carter shared that he has opted to accept some suggestions, but veto eight of the proposed changes. With all suggested amendments, the tax increase would have been 5.29 per cent. With Carter's eight vetoes taken into consideration, the tax rate has been capped at 4.46 per cent.

Each of the vetoes are clearly outlined on the Township of Minden Hills' website. One of the amendments Carter vetoed was "That Council amends the 2026 Mayoral Budget to remove $120,000 from Capital Budget for the Pickup truck in the Public Works - Roads."

Carter provided a lengthy explanation for the veto, largely, that it is a department that continues to grow in need as the population of the community increases. He noted that neighbouring communities have a similar network of roads, and maintain them with three or more vehicles or staffing resources.

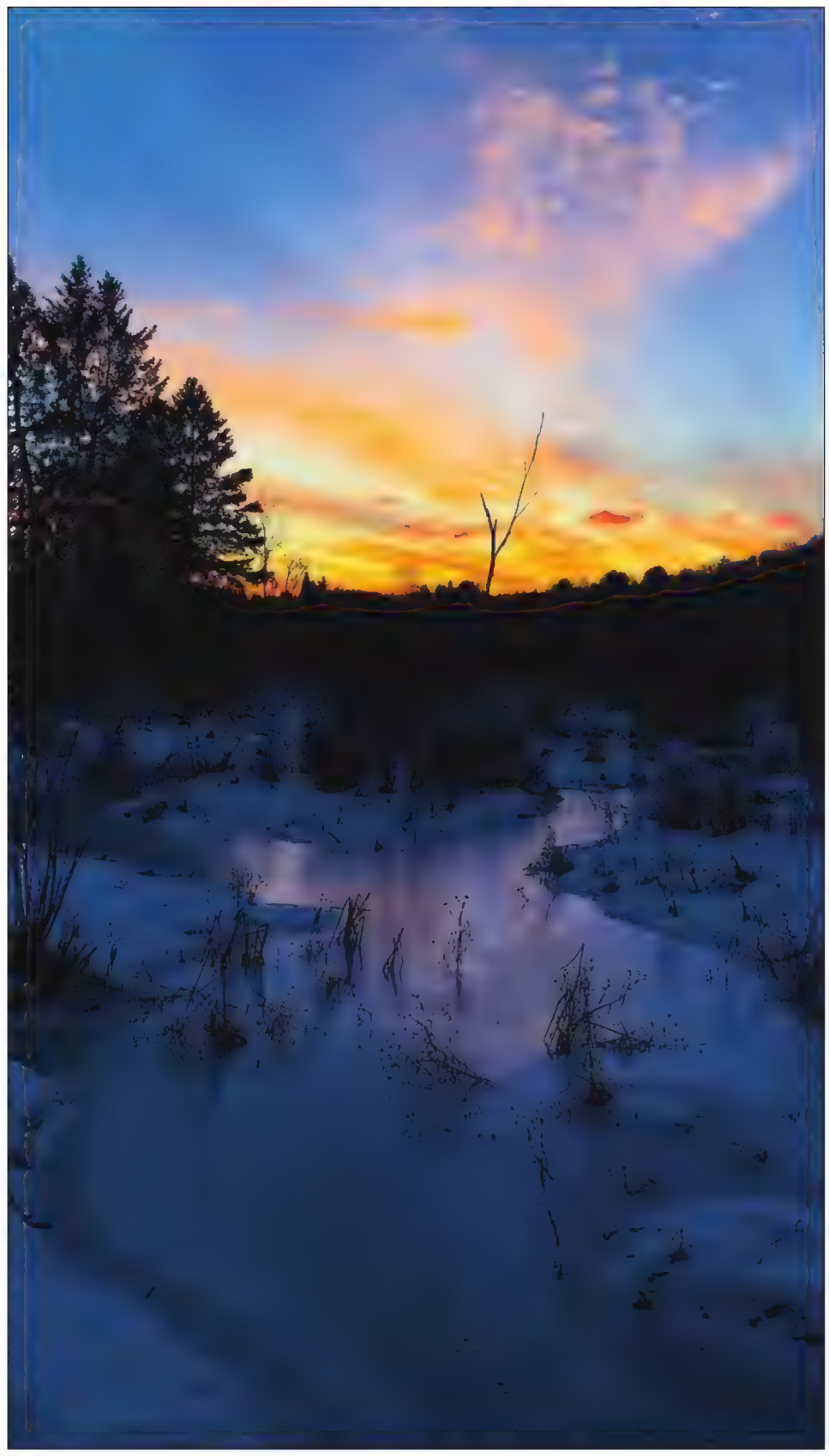
Another veto was for funds set aside for the former fire hall, which sits decrepit off Milne Street. The amendment made for that project proposed adding $50,000 to the tax levy for a project around the old fire hall. The project was undefined at the time of the proposal. "(We) are consulting with business owners to determine programs and investments needed to revitalize the town," said Carter behind his reasoning. "The outcomes of that work will provide needed direction to determine what is needed and desired in Minden, including the undeveloped area and the Old Fire Hall. Without the results of that work, it is highly speculative to increase the tax levy by $50,000 for an undefined study."

> *"Without the results of that work, it is highly speculative to increase the tax levy by $50,000 for an undefined study ..."*
>
> — Minden Mayor Bob Carter

Carter also noted that because this is an election year, the next council should be responsible for projects of that capacity, and the developments they wish to lead.

The announcement of Carter using his Strong Mayor Powers to challenge the amendments was met with mixed results on social media, with some questioning the democratic process, and others confused about the need for such powers in a rural setting.

Mayor Carter's vetoes to council amendments came into effect on Jan. 16, but are not necessarily set in stone. With the written vetoes and reasoning behind each one, council can override him with a two-thirds majority vote. The final day of the Minden budgeting process is set for Feb. 3.



Feeling frosty

The weather may be cold, but it has resulted in some stunning evening sunsets along the Minden River Walk. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff

www.mindenhills.ca — In Case of Emergency Dial 911 / After-Hours Municipal Emergency Dial 1-866-856-3247

THE TOWNSHIP OF MINDEN HILLS
IN SEASON, EVERY SEASON

COUNCIL MEETINGS VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON

Council and Closed Session meetings are currently being conducted in-person (Council Chambers, 7 Milne St., Minden) and with electronic participation. The scheduled upcoming meetings are:

January 22 - Regular Council Meeting
February 12 – Regular Council Meeting

Members of the Public are invited to observe Council proceedings by attending in-person or via the live-stream link.

MINDEN HILLS CULTURAL CENTRE

• A selection of artwork from the Agnes Jamieson Gallery's permanent collection, as well as new acquisitions, is now on display. The Gallery is open Tuesday to Saturday from 10 am – 4 pm. All are welcome. Admission is by donation.

• Join the UFO's (UnFinished Objects Craft Group) in the Welch Room on Friday, January 23 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm. All are welcome!

For information on all the programs and exhibits offered at the Minden Hills Cultural Centre: culturalcentre@mindenhills.ca or call 705-286-3763.

EVENTS AT THE ARENA

• Full day PA Day camp on Friday January 30th.

• Is your youth getting ready to stay home alone? Register them for the Home Alone Safety for Kids Course offered at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena.

Registration for both events occurs online at www.mindenhills.ca/recreation or in person at the SG Nesbitt Memorial Arena front desk.

WINTER REGISTERED PROGRAMS

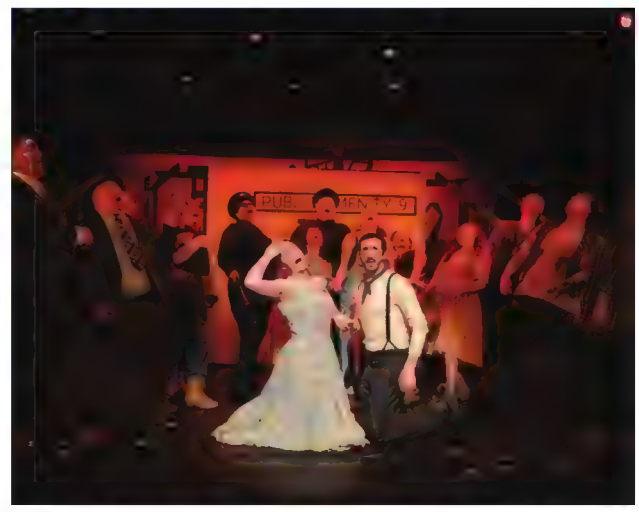
From Nov 1st to Apr 30th overnight parking is illegal from midnight to 8:00 AM on township roadways and parking lots. Parking in the turning circle of a cul-de-sac is prohibited during all hours. Vehicles parked in areas that interferes with snow removal will be towed away and/or ticketed at the owner's expense.

7 Milne Street, PO Box 359, Minden, ON K0M 2K0 705-286-1260 Toll Free: 1-844-277-1260 Fax 705-286-4917 Township.Minden.Hills Minden Hills@twpmindenhills @Township_MindenHills

July 2025 Year in Review

Graduations across the county filled the month of June. /FILE

Maggie Gallant and Olivia Jansen are all smiles during the fishing derby as part of The Township of Minden Hills annual Canada Day celebration. /FILE



Urinetown kicked off the Highlands Summer Festival Season. /FILE

Pride in the Highlands comes to Dysart

There's a new sense of pride in Haliburton Village.

Pride in the Highlands was approved for a formal flag raising in Dysart for the first time. The volunteer organization came before Dysart council with a formal ask for an annual flag raising to coincide with the Pride Festival that takes place across the county in August. "Our mission is to foster a safe, inclusive, and respectful community for 2SLGBTQIA+ members and our allies, while celebrating and promoting the vibrant diversity throughout the Haliburton Highlands," opened Chris Hewson, the co-chair for Pride in the Highlands.

The festival is one of the largest cultural festivals in Haliburton County.

Dysart council questions sign costs

Signs: sealed, but not yet delivered.

The landscape consulting firm pl.ural was tasked with providing an analysis of signage across the county, and has recently presented to each lower-tier municipality on their findings. Dysart was their last stop, when they presented a delegation to council at the end of June.

The recommendation from pl.ural around Dysart signage was to install 48 signs around the municipality, including 26 in Haliburton Village, five in Eagle Lake, two in Harcourt, seven in West Guilford, and the remaining seven in various "rural areas". Sean Kelly, the project manager for the initiative, outlined the importance of consistent and coherent signage across a community, establishing a unified sense of place, and identifying common shared themes.

Curry Motors expands family

It's the dawn of a new era for the team at Curry Motors.

The well-known car dealership in Haliburton has been a staple to the community for 102 years. But Bob Bullock, the general manager of the facility, knows when it's time to grow.

"We've added a fourth store," said Bullock with pride. "We will be expanding to Peterborough."

The dealership is currently owned by the Harwood Automotive Group, and run by the Campbell family, who have deep ties to the Haliburton Highlands. But with business booming, Bullock and the team at Curry Motors have a need for more services and resources.

Cottage Country Building Supplies celebrates ten years

In many ways, the presence of Cottage County Building Supplies in the heart of Carnarvon is a tangible tie to the history of logging in the Haliburton Highlands.

Its very existence is a celebration of the past.

But what makes it even more noteworthy, is the fact that it's a family affair.

The Carnarvon staple spent a July weekend celebrating ten years in business at that location. "It was excellent," said Ryan Emmerson, the general manager of the store. "I'm not sure what my expectations were. I wasn't sure how it would go, but it exceeded all expectations."

High wildfire risk for portion of Haliburton County

A portion of Haliburton County was been labelled a high wildfire risk, according to the Ministry of Natural Resources, as much of the area endured a dry spell.

The southern portion of the county was at a high risk of wildfire, including Haliburton Village, Minden and Wilberforce as of July 10. "The wildland fire hazard is currently low to moderate for Haliburton County with an area near the southern end of the county showing a high fire hazard," fire information officer Alison Lake said in an email. "The hazard is higher in areas that have not received recent rainfall." While wildfires burn in northern Ontario, the MNR said "the province has adequate resources on hand" to tackle the current fire conditions.

Molou comes to light

It's a beacon of light, a symbol of times gone by. "When you picture Haliburton, the Molou sign is one of the first things to come to mind," said Joel Finkelstein, the most recent owner of the former Molour Theatre in downtown Haliburton. Finkelstein brought in local electrician Gerald Sharp to tackle the long-dormant sign. With a few new bulbs and some modern rewiring, the sign shines again, attached to a timer that flicks it on at dusk each evening.

And the community has noticed. A video of the twinkling sign was posted on Facebook, with over 500 likes and dozens of comments connecting the community to their memories. "Brings back many memories … all good! I even sold popcorn there one summer!" recalled one. "I love this so much," says another, "I wish I had a time machine …"

Violent storm rips through Haliburton County

A tornado-warned storm swept through Haliburton County in July toppling trees, overturning aircraft and knocking out power for thousands of hydro customers. The storm system moved into the area on the evening of July 24, bringing with it violent winds and torrential rain.

Severe thunderstorm watches and warnings were issued Thursday afternoon. As the system approached the region, a tornado warning was issued for the area just before 6:30 p.m. with the weather alert ringing out on cellphones throughout the county.

"Take immediate cover in a basement or interior room if weather threat approaches," read the alert. "Shelter from flying debris if outside." The warning came as many vendors were setting up tents at Head Lake Park for the Haliburton Art and Craft Festival.

Minden Minor Baseball players were almost as exciting as the Blue Jays season over the summer. /FILE

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August 2025 Year in Review

Kosy Korner celebrates 90 years in Haliburton

Kosy Korner has become a long-standing local institution on Highland Street, and celebrated 90 years on Aug. 12. Established in 1935, the community staple is known for its homestyle meals, serving up all-day breakfast, and roasted turkey daily. The restaurant also offers a welcoming, cozy atmosphere with rustic decor. Despite a couple of changes in ownership over the decades, Kosy Korner has always maintained its traditional feel.

Fire ban slams the county

On Tuesday, Aug. 5, the four fire chiefs from across Haliburton County officially announced a total fire ban. "The ban is being implemented through a joint decision of the County's four Chief Fire Officials due to ongoing hot and dry weather," read the statement.

"Hopefully over the course of the next week or so, we'll start to get some rain," said Minden Hills fire chief, Don Kruger. "We need at least one solid day of rain."

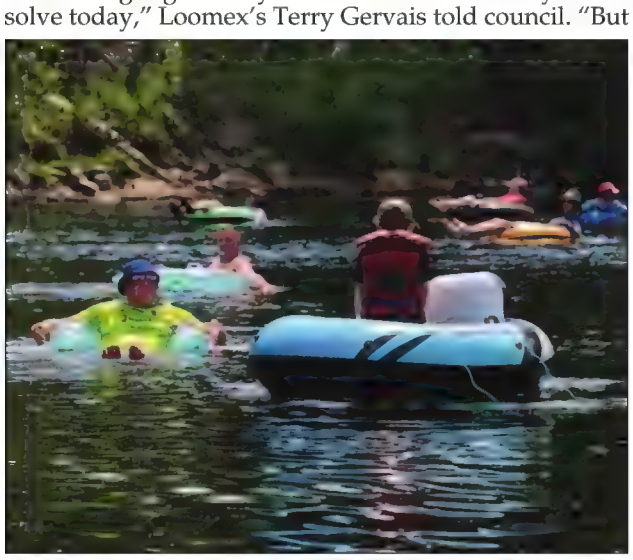
The hot and dry weather that's graced the Haliburton Highlands for the majority of the summer has played a role in the safety and security of fire usage. While Kruger noted that he has not received any wildfire calls in Minden Hills, he noted that Highlands East and Dysart have received a few.

New report recommends closure of Highlands East fire halls

A new report recommends that Highlands East should work to consolidate its fire services by closing some of its current fire halls while building a new facility.

Consulting firm Loomex Group presented to the municipality a final fire master plan on Aug. 12, outlining 33 recommendations to modernize the fire department. The plan generally outlines strategies to improve public education, code enforcement, and fire suppression services to protect residents and property. Among the recommendations is a fire station consolidation plan.

"This is probably the biggest recommendation that I want to highlight today … and it's not one that you can solve today," Loomex's Terry Gervais told council. "But it's really something that both this council and future councils got to look at both from a strategic position but a financial position and what's best for the fire service and the residents."



Swimmers explore Minden's Gull River to beat the heat. /FILE

Kids take part in the Pride in the Highlands celebration in Minden on at the end of August. /FILE

AH makes moves towards Indigenous Garden at Tapscott Lopes Park

Algonquin Highlands announced the acquisition of the Dorset Pavilion and Community Park, donated by long-time cottagers Don Tapscott C.M. and Ana Lopes C.M. AH promised an Indigenous Garden in the park as part of the deal, created in collaboration with members of the Indigenous community. AH recreation manager Chris Card went to council to propose hiring a consultant from Four Directions of Conservation Consulting Services, the same consultant that worked with the township in developing their land acknowledgement statement.

AH Council eyes removing log chute

Chris Card, Parks, Recreation, and Trails Manager for Algonquin Highlands discussed the fate of the Hawk Lake Log Chute to AH council. In April of this year, council requested that they reach out to Hawk River Construction for a quote on the deconstruction of the historic log chute.

Parks Canada said that the removal of the structure would not impact the water at their dam, but did advise that it would affect water levels and properties downstream.

"It is in a state of complete disrepair at this point," said Card.

In order to remove the log chute, the water levels would need to come down, noted Card. With the unpredictability of weather, he recommended that the chute be disassembled in June of next year.

Opera shows wowed audiences throughout August. /FILE

Pride co-chairs air concerns at flag raising

As with tradition, Minden Hills was the first in Haliburton County to raise the pride flag on the morning of Monday, Aug. 18. This year marked the ninth year of pride celebrations in the county.

Pride in the Highlands co-chairs Allan Guinan and Chris Hewson, Ward One Councillor Shirley Johannessen, M.P. Jamie Schmale, and Bob Baynton-Smith all spoke at the event.

Guinan says that while the county's pride celebrations, now known as Pride in the Highlands, have been a tremendous success, there has been a lack of interest in new volunteers with their organization. Without new voices joining, he fears that this year's pride celebrations may be their "last hurrah."

Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MP Jamie Schmale poses with Kosy Korner owners Brendon Clarke and Christine Clarke ahead of the cake-cutting in celebration of the restaurant's 90th anniversary. /FILE

Drag Queen Plum Vicious performs during the Pride in the Highlands celebration in Minden./FILE

September 2025 Year in Review

It's back to school for students across the county!/FILE

The Corduroy Enduro in Gooderham brought in visitors from across the country. /FILE

Backlit Re/Max gets temporary reprieve from by-law enforcement

The backlit Re/Max sign adorned to a building on Highland Street will continue to shine after the municipality granted the building owner temporary reprieve from by-law enforcement.

During Dysart et al's regular council meeting, Christopher Alexander, owner of Re/Max Professionals North Brokerage, requested relief from a section of by-law that prohibits backlit signage in the area. "First I want to apologize for the mixup," Alexander told council. "When we had the sign designed it was all in good faith and we had expected the sign company to follow all of the by-laws, get the appropriate permits but obviously that did not happen."

Minden's Boshkung Brewing nominated for Ontario Made Award

Boshkung Brewing was nominated for the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) Ontario Made Retailer Spotlight Award. This is the fifth annual competition put on by CME for businesses registered with Ontario Made. The Ontario Made Retailer Spotlight Award is for a retailer that highlights the Ontario Made logo and the importance of producing products in Ontario. The retailer also promotes the collective voices of the Ontario Made Community and raises public awareness of Ontario Made manufacturers, other retailers and partners to amplify the voice of the Ontario Made brand.

Rare blue green frog found at Walkabout Farms in Minden

With the fire ban being lifted on Thursday, Aug. 28, the recent rain has been a blessing not only for humans, but nature around us.

On Friday, Aug. 15, Jennifer Semach of Walkabout Farm Therapeutic Riding noticed a visitor in their horse trough. "It came over to the horse trough that I had over filled to get some moisture and relief from the heat," said Semach. "Amphibians have really suffered this summer."

The visitor was a blue-coloured green frog. This blue coloration, called axanthism, is caused by a mutation in the frog's cells, reducing the amount of yellow pigmentation in their skin, and is incredibly rare to discover.

Weather played a factor for summer business in Haliburton

As the summer comes to a close for another year in Haliburton, some businesses had a successful season with the weather providing a helping hand. With the bustling sidewalks and a steady stream of vehicular traffic, downtown Haliburton was a busy spot for much of the summer. However, it was a bit of a slow start for many of the businesses.

"The season was a little bit slow picking up, we didn't really get the temperatures or the water temperature until late June, compared to last year where it got warmer a little faster," Algonquin Outfitters' Scott Swaga said. "We noticed it was a little slower for the kayaks and the water sports activities until late June and then everything kind of exploded."

Despite the slow start, Swaga said the business made up for it and then some and the hot weather really helped.

Colleges declare strike

As of 12:01 a.m. on Sept. 11, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) has declared a strike amongst college support staff, in an effort to ensure job security, says the union. "This is not just a fight for a contract," says a statement on the OPSEU website, "it's about the future of student support. We're fighting because we know our students need us."

The strike occurs in the midst of an ongoing dispute between OPSEU and the College Employer Council (CEC). The former has been seeking confirmation around job security and appropriate compensation for their roles.

Police investigating increase in property crime in Highlands

Officers with the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) say they are investigating an uptick in property crime including break-ins at several businesses in downtown Haliburton.

"OPP are investigating several break and enters in downtown Haliburton reported early on September 20, 2025," police said in a statement. "Cash was stolen from local businesses and attempts were made to enter four separate locations." Kim Emmerson said that Emmerson Lumber was among the several businesses targeted in the weekend incidents.

Habitat, P4P partner to build 35 new affordable homes in Haliburton

Habitat for Humanity Peterborough & Kawartha Region and Places for People are joining forces to build 35 new affordable homes in Haliburton. The charities announced the plans to build a 35-unit affordable condo development on Peninsula Road, bringing more affordable housing to the community. "These will be one to two-bedroom modern homes, thoroughly designed with accessibility and universal layouts that work for individuals, couples, singles, families and seniors," Habitat PKR board chair Hope Lee announced on Sept. 18 at the Haliburton Legion. "They will be bright, energy efficient and built to last because at Habitat for Humanity, affordable never means cutting corners."

Handling of Lochlin community centre a disgrace, says councillors

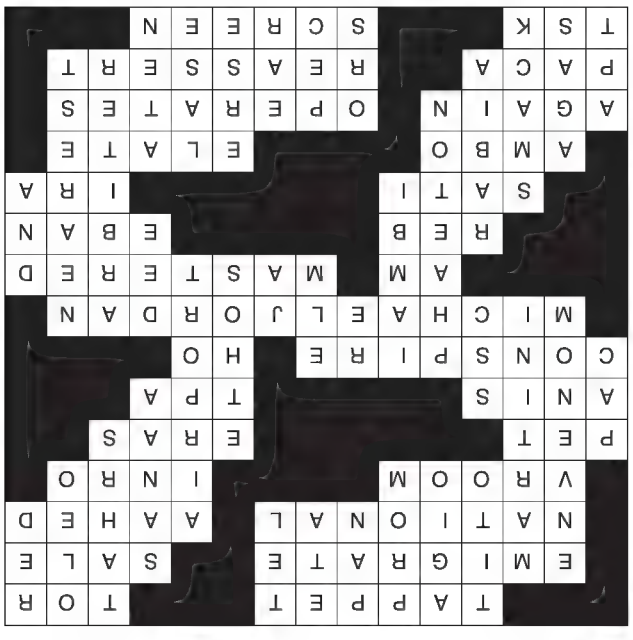
On Thursday, Sept. 25, Minden Hills Council discussed accepting Garbutt Disposal's bid for demolishing the Lochlin Community Centre. "I am wondering if it should be left as it is for now and left as part of the building process," asked Deputy Mayor Lisa Schell.

One option could be that the building is left standing and renovated to meet the needs of the community. "I have always been in favour of keeping this building and maybe trying to restore it someday," said Councillor Bob Sisson. Council deferred the final decision to a future meeting.

Huskies Hockey

The Huskies welcomed the Aurora Tigers over the weekend in Minden, and played a fast-paced game that ended in a 6-2 win for the Huskies. The local team is currently holding the fifth position in the Eastern Conference of the OJHL, with 25 wins out of the 42 games played thus far. The next home game is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 24 against Trenton. /TIM YANO staff photographer

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



SUDOKU SOLUTION

2	4	3	7	6	1	9	8	5
8	7	9	3	4	5	1	6	2
1	5	6	2	8	9	7	4	3
7	3	5	1	9	6	8	2	4
4	2	8	5	7	3	6	9	1
9	6	1	8	2	4	3	5	7
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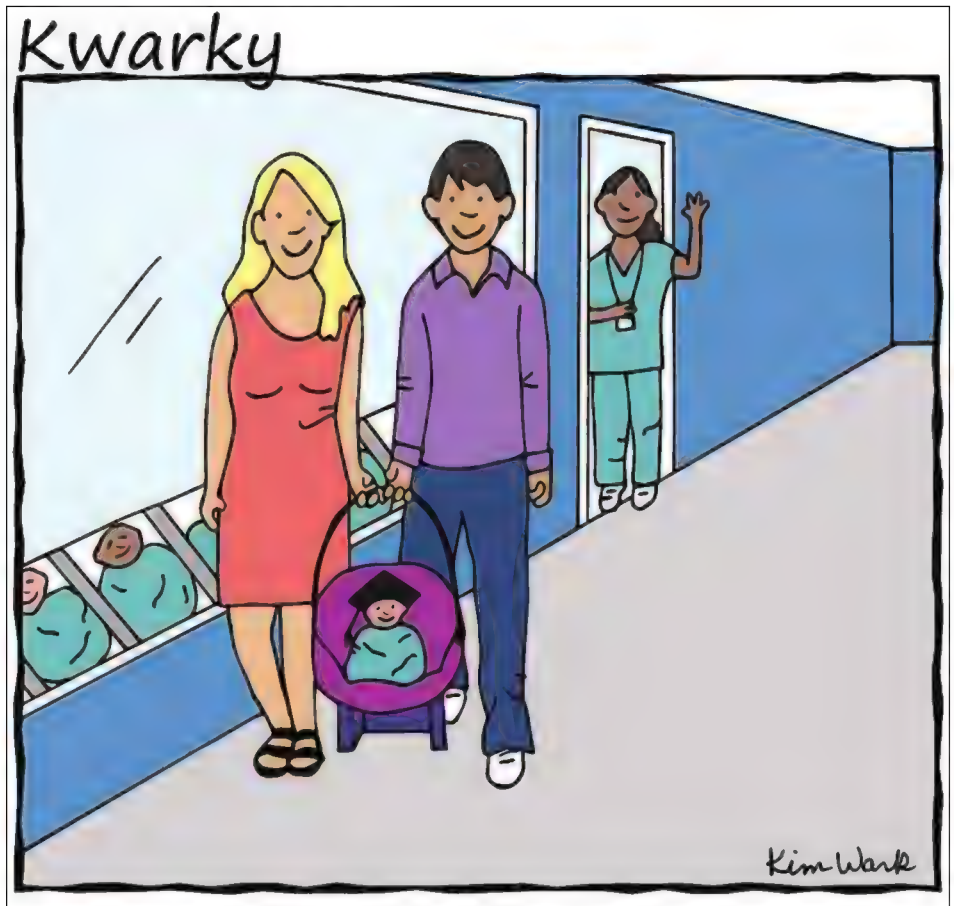

Baby's First Graduation

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	4		7					
	7			4				2
		6						3
			1	9				4
					3		9	
9				2				
				5			1	
	9	7	6					
		2	4	3		5		

Level: Intermediate

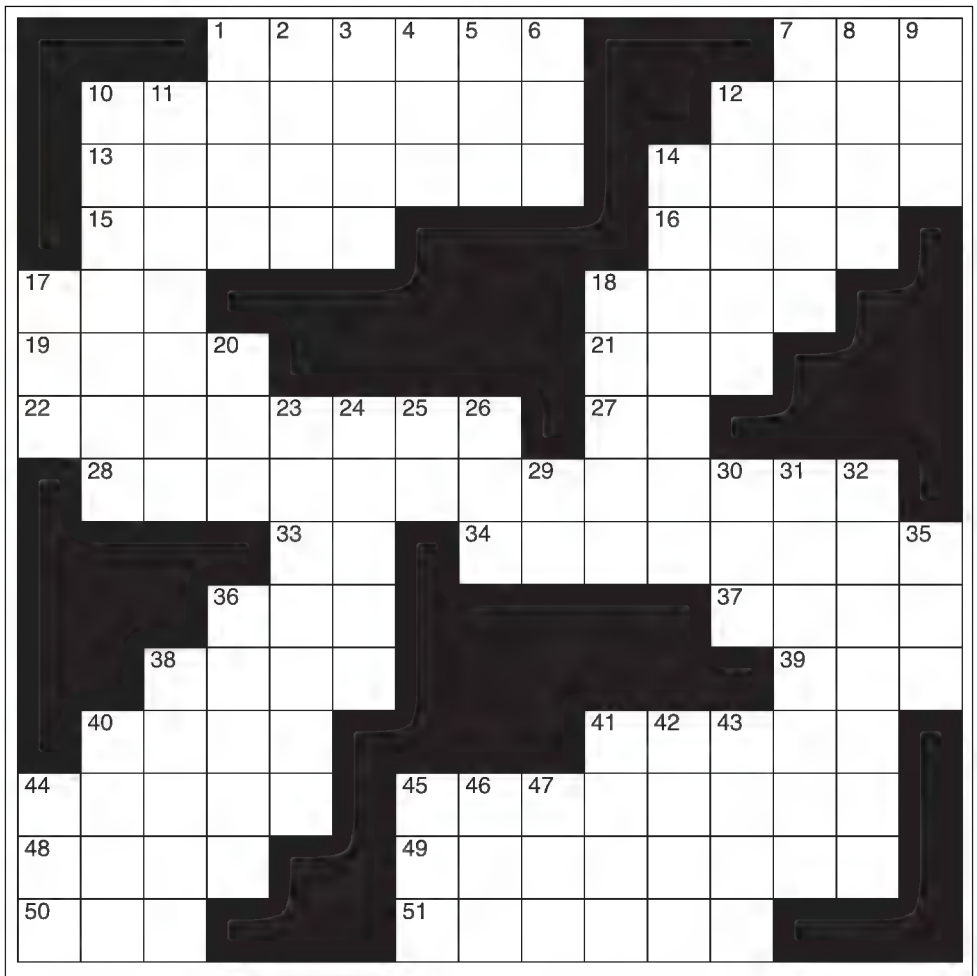
Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers on page 17



CLUES ACROSS
1. Mechanical lever
7. Rocky peak
10. Leave a country
12. Discount
13. D.C. ballplayer
14. Partner to "oohed"
15. Engine sound
16. Japanese ornamental box
17. Fido is one
18. Amounts of time
19. DiFranco and Phyo are two
21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
22. Make secret plans
27. "Tiny Bubbles" singer
28. "His Airness"
33. Morning
34. Perfected
36. Winger guitarist Beach
37. Abba __, Israeli politician
38. Self-immolation by fire ritual
39. A way to save money
40. Pulpit
41. Make ecstatically happy
44. Once more
45. Works on
48. Nocturnal S. American rodent
49. State again
50. Expression of disappointment
51. Type of door

CLUES DOWN
1. Yugoslavian communist leader
2. Exchange rate
3. High school dance
4. Peter's last name
5. When you anticipate arriving
6. Israeli city __ Aviv
7. Goat-like mammals
8. Margarine
9. End-of-the-spectrum color
10. Make poisonous
11. Popular beverage
12. Actress Lathan
14. Where planes land and depart
17. Political fundraising entity
18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
20. Buffer used in microbiology
23. Light, open carriage
24. Metrical feet
25. Email subject line feature
26. A street with lots of nightmares
29. Rapper Rule
30. River in Scotland
31. One who settles a dispute
32. Most chummy
35. We all have our own
36. Arab tribe
38. Slap
40. Ottoman military commanders
41. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
42. Emit coherent radiation
43. Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)
44. Inclined to
45. Olfactory reference syndrome
46. Chest muscle (slang)
47. Body part

Answers on page 17

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COMING EVENTS

Minden Agricultural Society
The MAS, sponsors of the Haliburton County Fair & the Rubber Ducky Race, is holding their AGM on
Saturday, January 24, 2026
in Room 1,
Minden Community Centre,
55 Parkside Street.

Refreshments at 12:30 p.m.
Meeting at 1 p.m.

New directors welcome

FOR RENT

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BIRTHDAYS

Happy 100th Birthday
Ruth MacBrien
Come celebrate with us,
Best wishes only.
All are welcome!
Minden Bible Church,
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Jan 31,2026
1-4 pm,
Cake cutting 2pm

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The hourly range for this permanent position is $18.48 - $21.62.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to info@ haliburtonlibrary.ca no later than **Thursday, J anuary 29, 2026, at 4:30pm.**

We thank all who apply for this position; however only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

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Reporting to the Director of Public Works, this position has primary responsibility for traffic analysis and road signage.

Preferred candidates will have post-secondary education in civil engineering or land development and 2 years of experience in road construction and maintenance, preferably in a municipal environment. Must have a valid G driver's licence. The hourly rate for this unionized CUPE position is $36.08.

Visit our website at www.haliburtoncounty.ca/careers for a detailed posting and job description.

Please forward your resume to shume@haliburtoncounty.ca no later than February 6, 2026.

We thank all who apply for this position; however, only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

The County of Haliburton is an equal employer. Accommodation can be provided in all steps of the hiring process, please contact Human Resources for further details.

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the information gathered will be used solely for the purpose of job selection.

Minden Community Food Centre

WE ARE HIRING
Assistant Manager, Minden Community Food Centre

We are an accredited food bank under Food Banks Canada and are looking for an assistant manager to assist with our operations in Minden, Ontario. This part-time position requires an individual with

- Good management, organizational, decision making and customer service skills
- Ability to navigate difficult situations and provide guidance as needed relating to visitors, staff, and volunteers
- Ability to multitask, delegate, and work under pressure at certain times
- Possess excellent communication and relationship-building abilities

A detailed job description can be found at www.mindencommunityfoodcentre.ca/joinus.
The hourly rate is $23.34 is based on 16 hours per week.
The application deadline is February 6, 2026. Please send your resume and cover letter to: chair@ mindencommunityfoodcentre.ca

We thank all applicants for their interest; only those selected for an interview will be contacted.

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Deadline Friday at 12 pm

OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Arvo Joseph Kaasalainen

Passed away peacefully at the Haliburton Hospital with his family at his side on Wednesday, January 14, 2025, in his 90th year.

Beloved husband for 65 years to Barbara (nee Gillies). Dear father of Paul and Diana of Canning Lake, John and Dawn of Barrie, Steven and Sharon of Burlington. Loving grandpa of Travis, Chrissy, Jason (Megan), Autum, Andrew, Aaron, Geoffrey, Kursten and great grandpa of Indiana, Isla and Wesley. Dear brother of the late Ernie and Karlo; survived by their children Randy, Danny, David and Sheila. Fondly remembered by his many nieces, nephews, extended family and friends.

Following the end of the 2nd World War, Jalmari, Helvi, Arvo and his brothers emigrated from Finland to Canada and settled in the Finnish Village on the south shore of Canning Lake. Arvo spent his working life teaching at the Clinton Air Force base, Haliburton Highlands Secondary School and the Westwood Secondary School in Malton.

A Celebration of Arvo's Life will take place in the Spring of 2026 at the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., 127 Bobcaygeon Rd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

The family would like to express special thanks to Andrew (PSW), the Minden Fire Fighters, Paramedics and staff at the Haliburton Hospital for their extraordinary help and compassion.

Memorial Donations to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) or the Charity of your choice would be appreciated by the family.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

In Loving Memory of

Bishop, Wendy Denise

Passed away at Caressant Care in Lindsay on Thursday January 8th, 2026 in her 87th year. She was born in 1939 in Niagara Falls and grew up in Haliburton, ON.

Preceded in death by her parents Harry and Viola Bishop (nee Curry). Sister of Pat Irwin and brother Curry Bishop. She is survived by her daughters Sharyl, and Dana Boyle, grandchildren Cory, Shannon, Brock, and Reid, and great grandson Rhett Medley.

A beautiful woman both inside and out, she will be missed.
The family requests that any donations be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Online condolences may be received at www.millvalleyfuneral.com.

In Loving Memory of

Edna Kostiuk

passed away peacefully in the early morning of January 11, 2026 at Hyland Crest Long-Term Care Home in Minden, Ontario, in her 98th year.

Edna was born in Vimy Ridge District, near the Village of Pine River Manitoba, in October 1928. She spent her childhood years with her family in the Pine River area, before moving to Ontario and eventually settling in Toronto. Edna was an extraordinary self-made woman who worked hard throughout her life to help support her family and herself. She had several roles over the years, the most recent of which was Director at Canadian Dental Service Plans Incorporated, where she was highly regarded, and worked until her retirement. She was also a contributing author to a book called Hardships to Happiness, which tells of the history of Pine River, Manitoba and its Ukranian heritage. Edna had many interests, including nature, gardening, history, travelling, poetry, movies, music, reading, health and nutrition, and cooking. Her most cherished interest was spending time with her family, especially children; although she had no children of her own, she was a beloved 'Auntie' to all her nieces and nephews.

Edna was predeceased by her parents, Kost and Betty Kostiuk; her siblings Florence, Ernie (Lorraine, deceased), Toni (Bill, deceased), and Evelyn (Ron); as well as niece Kathy and nephew Chris. She will be dearly missed by her brother-in-law Ron Scott; nieces Sharon (Rick) and Carolyn (Jim), and nephews Jay, Jeff (Cindy) and Bill; and great-nephews Jason, Blake, and Brock, and great-niece Ashley.

A service to honour Edna was held on Friday January 16th, 2026 at Glendale Funeral Home & Cemetery, 1810 Albion Road, Etobicoke, Ontario, M9W 5T1. Visitation took place at 9:00 AM; the service was at 10:00 AM, followed immediately by interment at Glendale Memorial Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation, in recognition of the wonderful care and support provided to Edna and her family over the past five years by all the staff at Hyland Crest Long-Term Care Home.

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In Loving Memory of

Marlene Mae Watson (nee Mumford)

Passed away peacefully at the Peterborough Regional Health Centre on Thursday, January 15, 2026 with her loving family by her side, at the age of 88.

Beloved daughter of the late Jim and Hazel Mumford, and step-daughter of the late Gerald Stevens. Predeceased by her husband John "Jack" McCrea Watson (2010). Loving mother of Larry (Lynn) Watson and Paul (Kath) Watson. Loving gramma of Andrew (Cassy), Jeffrey (Alitsha), Nikole (Andy) and great gramma of Emmett, Bianca, Quinn, Vander and one new baby boy to be born in March. Predeceased by her sisters Lorraine Hardonk, Donna Murdock and by her brother Ivan Mumford. Lovingly remembered by her nephew Rick Murdock, niece Carol Lee Willans and also by her family and friends.

Marlene and Jack raised their family in Tory Hill and then Wilberforce. They loved to camp with friends and travel in later years. Marlene retired from the Scotia Bank in Wilberforce, she was a community care driver and helped many clients file their personal income taxes. Marlene moved to Haliburton in 2014 where she continued to enjoy time with family and friends. Marlene moved to Fairhaven Long Term Care in February 2025.

Friends are invited to visit the family at the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., 127 Bobcaygeon Rd., P.O. Box 427, Minden K0M 2K0 on Saturday, January 24, 2026 from 12:00 o'clock noon until the time of the Service to Celebrate Marlene's Life at 1:00 pm. Reception to follow in the Monk-Cray Family Centre at the funeral home. Spring Interment at the South Wilberforce Cemetery.

Memorial Donations to the Canadian Cancer Society or Parkinson Canada or the Haliburton Highlands Health Services Foundation (HHHSF) would be appreciated by the family.

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory of

Laura Ann Willis (Johnson)

July 11, 1952

Laura passed away peacefully on Wednesday, January 14, 2026 after a courageous journey with Alzheimer's.

Laura leaves behind her loving husband Dave and his children Tanya (Glen) and Teresa (Kevin), her brother Doug (Debbie) and their children Hailey, Harley and Leif. She loved her grandchildren James, Ian, Sydney and Dylan and was proud of each of them.

Laura was a devoted teacher at Haliburton Highlands Secondary where she dedicated her life to shaping young minds and bodies with patience, passion and encouragement. Teaching was more than a career to Laura, and she leaves behind many students that she guided and supported.

Laura loved to travel and many of us have wonderful memories of the times spent in many places around the world. She also enjoyed her winters in Florida. Coming home to 12 Mile Lake was always wonderful too and was a place filled with warmth, laughter and countless cherished memories with family and her many friends. Laura's kindness and gentle strength will be remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing her. Her physical fitness was always important to her.

Laura's family would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to the outstanding staff members at Hyland Crest, many of whom are former students. They also appreciated the caring professionals at the Haliburton Emergency Department.

A celebration of Life will be held on Laura's birthday, July 11 at the Minden Legion. Details will be shared by the family at a later date.

If you're led to a donation in Laura's memory, donations to the Alzheimer's Society or local organizations would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

www.gordonmonkfuneralhome.com

Paula Brown

Resident of Haliburton

With heavy hearts, we share the passing of our beloved Mom, Daughter, Nana, and Sister.

Paula Joan Brown passed away peacefully in the early morning of Monday, January 12th, at the young age of 54. Beloved Mom of Brooke (Larry) and Izac (Lucy). Cherished daughter of Paul and Joan Brown.

Loving sister of Angie (Dan), Josh (Tara), and Krista. Also lovingly remembered by her Grandma, Doris Brown, and her three grandchildren, Hartlee, Blaeklynn, and Loxton. Paula was predeceased by her Grandpa, Homer Brown, and her Nana and Papa, Arthur and Lillian Johnson. Paula will be greatly missed by many aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, cousins, and many friends.

Paula lived every day to the fullest. She lived a life rooted in love, kindness, and devotion to her family. Being a Mom and Nana was her greatest joy, and she gave endlessly to those she loved. She was bright and warm, always smiling and bringing light to those around her.

Paula was well known in the community, and her friends meant everything to her. She loved jeeping and swimming, and her joy for life was felt by everyone who knew her.

Celebration of Life

Please join us for a Celebration of Paula's life on Wednesday, January 21, 2026, at **LAKESIDE BAPTIST CHURCH**, 9 Park St., Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0. Service led by Pastor Brian Plouffe beginning at 2:00 pm, followed by a Celebration of Life from 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm. As an expression of sympathy, donations to Snowflake Meadows would be appreciated by the family. Funeral Arrangements have been entrusted to the **HALIBURTON COMMUNITY FUNERAL HOME**, 13523 Hwy. #118 Haliburton, ON K0M 1S0 (705) 457-9209.

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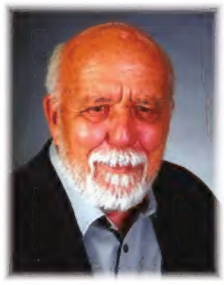

In Loving Memory of

Dave Bonham

(Feb 2, 1943 - Jan 13, 2026)

Sunset arrived for Dave on January 13, 2026.

Dave Bonham was the beloved husband of Cathy; a devoted dad to Jeff (Tanya), Mark (Jessica), and Matt (Laura); and a proud grandpa to eight grandchildren.

Born on Groundhog Day in 1943 and raised in Swansea, Ontario, Dave had a lifelong curiosity about how things work. He studied mechanical engineering at Queen's, completed graduate work at McMaster, and joined the University of New Brunswick in 1974. Over the years he taught generations of students in his own quiet, unassuming way, and was known for pitching in behind the scenes, including helping to launch the annual Coaster Derby and as a founding member of the Fredericton Rowing Club.

Retirement later brought him and Cath to Gull Lake, where he was happiest spending time with family and friends. He also stayed close to his community through service, including time with Rotary and volunteer work with the Haliburton Highlands Health Services.

He was predeceased by his parents, James Thompson Bonham and Violet Beatrice Bonham; his sister Shirley Lake (Doug); and his brothers Jake Saunders (Lucy) and Glen (Mickey).

He would like to thank the Haliburton County Community Paramedic Program and the Palliative Care Team for enabling Dave to live at home until the sun set.

Memorial donations to Minden Rotary and/or the Minden Community Food Centre would be appreciated by the family and can be arranged through the Gordon A. Monk Funeral Home Ltd., P.O. Box 427, Minden, Ontario K0M 2K0.

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Highlands wood will warm ice storm victims

Haliburton County is doing its part to help the victims of the ice storm that ripped through eastern Ontario earlier this month.

Haliburton County Warden Murray Fearrey announced that a load of cured firewood has been sent into the region. The load left Thursday from the Kinmount Wood products yard near Wilberforce.

"We worked through the Emergency Measures Organization," Fearrey said. "They directed the load to Alexandria, where it arrived on Friday."

The double load of dried, cut and split wood was unloaded by army personnel. It is being made available to local residents who require the fuel to heat their homes.

Fearrey said the suggestion for the firewood donation came from a number of reeves in the county who felt the local communities should be helping out somehow. The firewood donation appeared to be the most appropriate since Haliburton County exports firewood to other parts of the province:

He noted that Anson, Hindon and Minden Reeve Jeanne Anthon mentioned it at a committee meeting and that the Snowdon Council had discussed the idea of sending some help at its regular Monday night meeting.

According to the Warden, the load contained 17 bush cords or about 51 face cords of wood. The cost of the wood, including delivery, was about $3500.

Monmouth Reeve Keith Tallman, who visited the wood supply yard near Wilberforce, commented that the gift of wood was appropriate and the right thing to do. "They need our help. We have the wood. Who knows, some day we could be looking for assistance in a similar situation. It is good to be able to lend a hand and help them out, " Tallman said.

(For a personal account of the trials of living through the storm, see the column on page 6. Ontario Hydro and Ministry of Natural Resources personnel from the local offices, as well a number of private contractors have moved into the stricken area to assist with the clean-up. Anyone wishing to make a financial contribution to the Red Cross relief effort may do so at the Toronto Dominion Bank in Minden, through donations being collected this week at Archie Stouffer Elementary School (see story below) or by calling the Red Cross at 1-800-850-5090.)

Monmouth Reeve Keith Tallman with Kinmount Wood Products yard foreman Ken Ablett, inspects some of the firewood which the county sent to the victims of the ice storm in eastern Ontario. The 17 bush cords were delivered to Alexandria where residents without heat could use it to stoke their fireplaces and wood stoves.

ASES students issue icy challenge

Students and staff at Archie Stouffer Elementary School have issued a challenge to all of the schools in the District #15 School Board. They are challenging each school to donate a dollar for every student and staff member. The money will be donated to those in need in eastern Ontario and Quebec.

At the Minden school, donations from students and staff will be accepted all this week . The public is invited to get involved as well. The money raised will go to the Canadian Red Cross to aid in the relief and cleanup effort.

Special Education Resource Teacher, Eric Thompson, came up with the idea last year during the Manitoba flood. At that time ASES raised $950.30 for the relief effort in and around Winnipeg last spring. This year, before he had a chance to suggest the fundraiser again, several teachers approached him about the idea. "It is a good opportunity for the students to collect and organize money," said Thompson. "It becomes an extension of the learning process. This will give them a chance to apply what they have learned in a real situation. There is learning involved as well as the humanitarian aspect."

The Icy Challenge was sent to the superintendents of the District #15 School Board, who then distributed the information to all of schools. The school board includes schools in Victoria, Haliburton and Muskoka.

The money will be collected by the students' council representatives of each class.

(more on page 3)

CHACE Daycare given green light for another year

by Ariel White

CHACE Inc. Daycare has been given a reprieve. The County of Haliburton Agency for Child Enrichment Board of Directors made the unanimous decision to maintain the facility for the next fiscal year, at a meeting on January 13.

The daycare centre faced certain closure on November 21, 1997, but after protest from concerned parents, the date was postponed until March 31 of this year, with the provision that the service increased both enrolment and funding support by that deadline.

CHACE Director Diane Loucks said that the centre is working hard to do just that. "It's coming along slowly, but we are on the right track," said Loucks. "We are very, very pleased with this decision. It's a go for the next fiscal year."

According to Loucks, there are 2.5 full day equivalent spaces that have been filled at the centre, with another two, pending subsidy, and 1.5 other possible participants. It is hoped that nine spaces will be filled by the March deadline. There are still spaces available for both toddlers and preschool children in the CHACE program.

As of January 13, the parents fundraising committee had gathered $5,869.09. The money was raised through a cheese sale and the CHACE daycare dream raffle. The centre is hoping to raise another $7200 for the daycare coffers throughout the coming year. There are plans for other fundraising campaigns in the next couple of months, which include the sale of Nevada tickets at the Esso Station in Norland, as well as a bingo on February 8 at 12:30. The daycare centre is also accepting donations from the community. "They (the fundraising committee) are doing very well and have made plans for projects into June and July," said Loucks.

Gord Schakelaar, the president of CHACE said that the March 31 deadline was making it difficult for the enrolment committee to entice new participants into the program. He said that no one wants to go to the trouble of enrolling a child in a daycare facility that may only be open for another six weeks. "The fundraising committee is working hard to meet the goals that we set out for it. But we felt that we had to give the enrolment a chance," said Schakelaar. "How can we expect the committee to do its job if the daycare is going to close?"

Diane Loucks agrees with Schakelaar, that the enrolment will benefit from the announcement. "This will maintain the stability in the program," she said.

Although the daycare will continue to operate, the board is still expecting the enrolment to meet its target of nine full day equivalent spaces, especially with toddlers and preschoolers.

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AH Station 80 joins #TeamBennyChallenge

THOMAS SMITH

Journalist

Members of the Stanhope Fire Department took to social media to put their support behind Benny. /submitted

A young boy in Alberta continues to inspire courage across the country.

Ben Thomas, an 11 year-old from a small hamlet outside of Edmonton is currently fighting cancer.

Having already defeated cancer in his kidney at the age of five, it has recently returned to his right lung. A second time in the ring for the young fighter.

After the recent diagnosis, Benny received some challenge coins from the RCMP. Wanting to collect more, his mother's posts on social media received an outpour of support.

His family began posting their journey to Facebook under the title Team Benny, for people to show support to him and cheer him on during his battle with cancer and treatment.

As a banner photo for their Facebook page, Benny's wall is covered in challenge coins and other emergency service memorabilia that he has received.

Emergency departments from across Canada and places like Australia have created videos, sent packages, and let Benny know that he is being cheered on.

Station 80 in Algonquin Highlands learned of the movement for Benny after one of their own developed cancer. They saw that the Huntsville, Lake of Bays, and Bracebridge Fire Departments had made videos for Benny and knew that they had to make one.

"We have heard that you are one brave and tough kid and we just wanted to let you know that you inspire us all," says the video, posted to their Facebook page.

In addition to the video, Station 80 made a donation to support Benny and his team during his fight.

"Firefighters in general have a yearning to help others in need, we come together with team support and inspiration for the cause," said Phil Dulong, president of the Stanhope Firefighters Association. "It's amazing the number of Fire Stations across Canada supporting Benny's Cancer Journey. It is a team effort and the challenge is accepted; the goal is to give Benny the inspiration and courage to help his battle."

In their video, Station 80 calls out the other AH fire stations, Minden Hills, and Haliburton's fire departments to create their own videos and support the #TeamBennyChallenge.

"Just like Mutual Aid Fire Calls, we come together when the calls come in," he said.

Dulong says that he hopes that the video they made and the virality of the #TeamBennyChallenge will bring awareness to the daily battles faced by those fighting against cancer, and how local fire departments can inspire and support the community around us in more ways than just fighting fires.

Team Benny has reported that packages have also come from Saudi Arabia, Armenia, Australia and France.

As of publication, Benny is receiving regular cancer treatments while posting ongoing updated videos of him opening packages, and letting his supporters know how he is feeling.

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